

Message Text

SECRET

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S E C R E T BERLIN 0103

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PBOR, MOPS, ETRN, WB, US, UR

SUBJECT: OPERATION OF AIRCRAFT OF 'O' DESIGNATION IN CORRIDORS
AND BCZ

1. CURRENTLY THERE ARE TWO U-6 SINGLE-ENGINE
AIRCRAFT BASED IN BERLIN, WHICH PERFORM RECONNAISSANCE
AND OBSERVATION MISSIONS WITHIN BERLIN CONTROL ZONE
(BCZ). THESE AGING AIRCRAFT ARE LAST OF THEIR TYPE
IN ARMY INVENTORY AND LACK OF SPARE PARTS AND QUALIFIED
MAINTENANCE PERSONNEL MAKE IT INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO
KEEP THEM IN SAFE FLYING CONDITION.
WITH EVERY YEAR THESE AIRCRAFT ARE KEPT
IN OPERATION, RISK OF ACCIDENT AND/OR SERIOUS POLITICAL
EMBARRASSMENT, PARTICULARLY IF PHOTOGRAPHIC
RECONNAISSANCE MISSION INVOLVED, INCREASES.

2. TO REMEDY SITUATION, REPLACEMENT OF U-6S WITH O-2S
HAS BEEN SUGGESTED. O-2 IS NOT PURPOSE-BUILT OBSERVATION
PLANE BUT IS MODIFIED VERSION OF CESSNA SUPER SKYMASTER,
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A LIGHT, HIGH-WING TWIN-ENGINE AIRCRAFT OF UNUSUAL PUSH-

PULL CONFIGURATION DEVELOPED FOR AND SOLD ON CIVILIAN
GENERAL AVIATION MARKET.

3. WHILE DAIR/P(45)71, SECOND REVISE, SPECIFIED NO
LIMITATIONS ON TYPES OF AIRCRAFT ALLIES MAY OPERATE IN
CORRIDORS AND BCZ, WE HAVE NOT FLOWN COMBAT AIRCRAFT SINCE
EARLY POST-WAR YEARS, AND SOVIETS OBJECT TO AIRCRAFT WITH
'O' DESIGNATION, VIZ INCIDENT IN MIDDLE 60S WHEN FLIGHT
OF ONE SUCH AIRCRAFT LED TO STRONG SOVIET PROTESTS AND
FIGHTER HARASSMENT. HOWEVER, AIRCRAFT INVOLVED, OV-1
MOHAWK, WAS CLEARLY PURPOSE-BUILT OBSERVATION AND
RECONNAISSANCE CRAFT WITH BASICALLY NO OTHER CAPABILITY.

4. WE BELIEVE REPLACEMENT OF AGING U-6 WITH
TWIN-ENGINE AIRCRAFT HIGHLY DESIRABLE IN ORDER TO
ENHANCE SAFETY AND INCREASE CHANCE THAT AIRCRAFT ON
PHOTO MISSION WHICH DEVELOPED TROUBLE NEAR EDGE OF BCZ
WOULD BE ABLE TO MAKE IT BACK TO WEST BERLIN AND AVOID
INCIDENT CREATING THREAT TO ALLIED RIGHTS IN BCZ. IF
IT IS AT ALL POSSIBLE, IT WOULD BE PREFERABLE TO RE-
DESIGNATE BERLIN-BASED O-2S IN THE U (UTILITY) SERIES.
IF, HOWEVER, REDESIGNATION PROVES IMPRACTICABLE, WE
BELIEVE PROBLEM OF INTRODUCTION OF O-TYPE CAN BE
MANAGED WITH SOVIETS IN CASE OF THIS PARTICULAR AIRCRAFT,
WHICH IS SO CLEARLY OF CIVILIAN PASSENGER-CARRYING ORIGIN.
WE WOULD POINT OUT TO SOVIETS THAT AIRCRAFT WAS
ESSENTIALLY SUPER SKYMASTER WITH ARMY MARKINGS, WHICH
WE HAD INTRODUCED TO ENHANCE OUR LIAISON CAPABILITIES
WITH UNITS TRAINING IN FRG (U-6 IS PRECLUDED FROM
CORRIDOR OPS BY US REGS PROHIBITING SINGLE-ENGINE
AIRCRAFT IN CORRIDORS, AND CURRENTLY ONLY ONE U-8 AVAIL-
ABLE FOR SUCH DUTIES). WE WOULD SCHEDULE SUCH MISSIONS
FOR Q-2S TO BACK UP OUR POINT.

5. EMBASSY'S VIEWS REQUESTED.

6. USCOB CONCURS.BORG

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